

## REMARKS

Applicants request favorable consideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1, 3-6, and 15-18 are presented for consideration. Claims 1, 15 and 17 are independent. Claims 17 and 18 have been added to recite additional features of the subject invention. Support for these claims can be found in the application as originally filed. Therefore, no new matter has been added.

Claim 1 and 3-6 were previously allowed in this application. Applicants submit that these claims, as well as claims 15 and 16 and new claims 17 and 18, patentably define features of the near-field photomask and the near-field exposure apparatus of the present invention. Accordingly, the instant application should be in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Steven E. Warner", is written over a horizontal line.

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